

Homeland Security National Strategy – Virginia State Document –

The Honorable John H. Hager

1. State's Organization for Homeland Security.

Vision - A safe and secure Virginia

Mission - The mission of the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness is to work with and through others – including federal, state, and local officials, as well as the private sector – to develop a seamless, coordinated security and preparedness strategy. The Office serves as the single point of contact in Virginia for the Department of Homeland Security.

Overview - Governor Warner created this new Cabinet-rank office in order to promote security measures at the highest level. The Assistant to the Governor is supported by a Deputy, Administrator and Assistant and is charged with:

- Ensuring that state resources are directed toward safeguarding Virginia and its citizens.
- Working with federal officials to obtain additional federal resources and coordinate policy development and information exchange.
- Coordinating working relationships between state agencies and the Governor's Cabinet.
- Serving as the Point of Contact with the Department of Homeland Security.
- Serving as the Governor's representative on regional efforts (National Capital Region, Hampton Roads, Richmond Seat of Government).
- Serving as a direct liaison between the Governor and local governments and first responders on issues of emergency preparedness.
- Educating the public on homeland security and overall preparedness issues.
- Chair the Governor's Secure Virginia Initiative Panel to make recommendations on preparedness (legislation, regulation, policy, budget, outreach, organization).
- Supporting volunteer effort throughout the state.
- Vice-Chair the Virginia Military Advisory Council to establish a working relationship with Virginia's active duty military bases.
- Reviewing/developing all disaster, emergency management and terrorism management plans for the state and its agencies.

2. States efforts for Homeland Security (Prevention, Vulnerability Reduction and Response and Recovery).

Establishing Secure Virginia - Governor Warner's Executive Order Seven established the Secure Virginia panel and charged it with developing plans for improving the Commonwealth's preparedness. Homeland Security is about preventing terrorism, reducing vulnerabilities and organizing for response and recovery in the event of incidents. The panel meets monthly and is divided into nine sub-panels covering all areas of activity in the state (Agribusiness, Citizens and Communities, First Responders, Government Operations and

Funding, Health and Medical, Industry and Commerce, Technology, Transportation, Utilities). The Panel makes real time recommendations to the Governor to improve Virginia's security and preparedness and assists with legislation and implementation of approved recommendations.

Commonwealth Preparedness Working Group – The operations team of state government meets regularly to coordinate and assess the state's preparedness and readiness. Representatives are from the Secretary of Public Safety, Office of Commonwealth Preparedness, Virginia State Police, Department of Emergency Management, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Department of Military Affairs, Department of Fire Programs, Department of Health, Department of Transportation, Capitol Police and Commerce and Trade. These are the front line departments who are involved daily with operations.

Partnering with the Department of Homeland Security - From day one of the Warner administration, this office has maintained constant communication with the White House Office of Homeland Security and now the Department of Homeland Security. With direction from President Bush, Secretary Tom Ridge and this Office have worked to promote the new Virginia Terrorist Alert System, develop Virginia Corps, and advance other efforts.

Establishing the Virginia Military Advisory Council - The Governor appointed this group to improve communications and coordination between the Defense Department installations in Virginia and State government, primarily with relation to domestic security and dependant issues.

Securing Preparedness Resources - In addition to the Governor's effort to increase state funding for preparedness initiatives, this office is leading the effort to secure additional federal funding as well. Virginia's unique geographic location – as home to the world's largest naval base, as a hub for Internet traffic, and as a neighbor to the nation's capital and backup location for federal operations creates a high profile for the state.

Reaching Out - The Governor's Assistant for Commonwealth Preparedness participates in numerous speaking engagements and conference appearances to inform Virginians and to secure volunteers in the fight against terrorism. Statewide Forums supplement our efforts to involve the public.

3. State's future initiatives and priorities.

Efforts listed above - Virginia puts great emphasis on the initiatives outlined above and will see them through to completion.

Promote Virginia Corps throughout the state – Volunteerism is important in the war on terrorism.

Planning – Establish strategic plans for Virginia to link with the national strategy.

4. Virginia Contacts.

John H. Hager, Assistant to the Governor for Commonwealth Preparedness (Homeland Security Director), 202 North Ninth Street, Fifth Floor, Richmond, VA 23219, P.O. Box 1475, Richmond, VA 23218, 804- 225-3826 (O), 804- 393-9420 (cell), 804-225-3882 (Fax), jhager@gov.state.va.us (email).

George W. Foresman, Deputy Assistant to the Governor for Commonwealth Preparedness, 202 North Ninth Street, Fifth Floor, Richmond, VA 23219, P.O. Box 1475, Richmond, VA 23218, 804- 225-3826 (O), 804- 337-4283 (cell), 804-225-3882 (Fax), gforesman@gov.state.va.us (email).

Regina J. Payne, Executive Assistant to the Governor for Commonwealth Preparedness, 202 North Ninth Street, Fifth Floor, Richmond, VA 23219, P.O. Box 1475, Richmond, VA 23218, 804- 225-3826 (O), 804-225-3882 (Fax), rpayne@gov.state.va.us (email)

Constance T. McGeorge, Special Assistant to the Governor for Commonwealth Preparedness, 202 North Ninth Street, Fifth Floor, Richmond, VA 23219, P.O. Box 1475, Richmond, VA 23218, 804- 225-3826 (O), 804-225-3882 (Fax), cmcgeorge@gov.state.va.us (email).

24 hour backup – Contact VA Emergency Operations Center at 1-800-468-8892.

3/17/03